



March 21, 2011

GHSO Sponsors Click It AND Ticket Teen Safety Belt Campaign *Program to Educate Teens on Importance of Buckling Up*

Nashville, TN – Each year, dozens of Tennessee teens die in traffic crashes and many of those are not wearing safety belts. Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for teenagers. The Governor's Highway Safety Office wants to help save lives by encouraging more teens to wear their safety belts. The GHSO is partnering with State Farm Insurance, Community Anti-Drug Coalitions Across Tennessee (CADCAT) and nine Tennessee high schools to sponsor a program called *Click It AND Ticket*. During the program, volunteers will conduct seat belt observations at the schools and students wearing their safety belts will be given a ticket to enter into a drawing to win a prize. The penalty for not wearing a safety belt in Tennessee is \$10, so volunteers will draw tickets and award \$10 gift cards to students. In addition, one student from each school will win a \$50 gift card and another student will win a \$100 gift card.

"In 2009, 110 teens died in traffic crashes in the state," said TDOT Commissioner John Schroer. "With proms and graduations just around the corner, this is a critical time to emphasize the importance of wearing a safety belt and encourage our teenagers to make this potentially life-saving decision."

Every year thousands of teens in the U.S. die in motor vehicle crashes. Since 2006, the number of Tennessee teenage deaths has declined from 185 to 110 in 2009. Still, mile for mile, teenagers are involved in three times as many fatal crashes as all other drivers.

"Teens need to remember whether they are driving across town or just around the neighborhood, wearing safety belts is the absolute best way to protect themselves and their passengers from severe injury or even death," said GHSO Director Kendell Poole. "Wearing your safety belt costs nothing, but not wearing it could cost you your life."

In 2009, 56 percent of the teens in the U.S. who were killed in crashes were not wearing a safety belt according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Educating high school students about the importance of buckling up every trip, every time is critical. The *Click It AND Ticket* project will supplement several other initiatives sponsored by GHSO and TDOT to educate teens and prevent the senseless loss of life.

TDOT reminds teens that distracted driving, like texting while driving, is a dangerous practice. Texting may be a convenient way to communicate but it can be deadly when done from behind the wheel of a vehicle. Texting while driving is also against the law in Tennessee.

Click it AND Ticket event schedule:

March 29	Sweetwater High School, Sweetwater	April 14	Riverdale High School, Murfreesboro
April 6	Glenclyff High School, Nashville	April 29	Jackson Co. High School, Gainesboro
April 8	Franklin Co. High School, Winchester	April 29	Southwind High School, Memphis
April 5	Beech High School, Gallatin	TBD	Brainerd High School, Chattanooga
April 13	Vol State Community College, Gallatin		

This is the second year these events have been funded by State Farm Insurance.

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